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Stuhlmann's Golden Mole

Rare capture in the Udzungwa Mountains, Tanzania

Helle Jørgensbye , Danish Zoological Society
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An unusual catch of a Stuhlmann's Golden mole *Chrysochloris stuhlmanni* was made during fieldwork in a high altitude forest on the Dabaga Plateau in the Udzungwa Mountains. The Udzungwa Mountains, located near Iringa in south-central Tanzania, are highly fragmented, varying in size from a few trees to 1100 hectares. The mole was caught in closed canopy forest in a forest fragment of 57 hectares, during a pit fall trapping exercise. This involves using 20 litre buckets buried so that the bucket-rim is level with the ground. A drift fence is put up between the buckets. This study, using 264 buckets for four nights in each forest, illustrated that despite their fragmented nature the Udzungwa Mountains support a number of threatened species that are only found in the Eastern Arc Mountains.

The Udzungwa Mountains are part of the Eastern Arc Mountains that together with other Eastern Afromontane forests comprise one of the 34 globally important biodiversity 'hot spots' (Conservation International 2006). In terms of the number of species and endemics, the Udzungwa Mountains, together with Uluguru and Usambara Mts., are of the highest priority for conservation (Burgess et al. 1998, Dinesen 1998, Dinesen et al. 2001). The Udzungwa Mountains contain the largest forest area and highest altitudinal range of forests within Eastern Arc Mountains. Despite being the focus for research for some decades, new species are still being discovered. As late as 2005, a new species of monkey (Highland Mangabey, *Lophocebus kipunji*) was reported by Jones et al. (2005) in West Kilombero Scarp Forest Reserve.

Stuhlmann's Golden mole

Stuhlmann's Golden mole is not especially rare even though it is seldom seen (Kingdon 1997). The Golden moles are only found in Africa and the 21 species belong to the group called Afrotheria. They are secretive creatures living their life underground, with no visible eyes, ears or tail. They all have digging forelegs with one or more greatly enlarged claws and less developed hindlegs. Their food consist of invertebrates, mostly caught underground (Kingdon 1974).

Stuhlmann's is the only Golden mole found in Tanzania and unusual among mammals – having black fur with a metallic greenish sheen (Kingdon 1974). Its entire life is evidently not spent underground as this specimen wandered around on the forest floor during the night. Was it searching for insects to eat or perhaps it was looking for a partner?

Details about this Stuhlmann's Golden mole

Latin name	*Chrysochloris stuhlmanni*
Kiswahili name	Fugo
Kihehe name	Lifufula
Location	Kawemba forest 8°08'10"-8°08'50"S - 36°00'50"-36°01'15"E
Date	16 October 2000
Altitude	1750 m
Habitat	Logging-disturbed montane forest with a canopy height of 20-30 m
Head & body	95 mm
Hind foot	10 mm
Weight	23 g

The skull of the specimen, and an unidentified mole found outside forest, are kept at Senckenberg Museum, Germany. Unfortunately the skinned specimen was eaten by a pet dog!

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank: the Tanzanian Commission for Science and Technology; the Forestry and Beekeeping division; the District Natural Resources Office; Iringa District Council and the village Chairmen in Kidabaga and Kiwalamu. The fieldwork for this study could never have been completed without valuable help from Eda Nyamoga, Lactel Mmehwa, Lukas Magova, Flora Kihoo, Mr. Wille, and Mr. Chestnut. Financial and logistical support was given by MEMA – the Udzungwa Mountains Forest Management and Biodiversity Conservation Component funded by the Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA). Logistical support was provided by Miss Tina Hanson.

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Mountain Galago

Galagoides orinus

in evergreen forest fragments on the Dabaga plateau, Tanzania

Helle Jørgensbye, Danish Zoological Society
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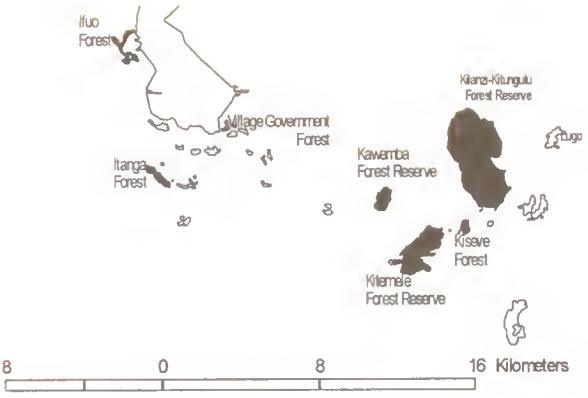

figure 1

Mountain Galago was described in 1936 from two specimens caught in the Uluguru Mountains (Lawrence & Washburn 1936). For many years it was treated as a subspecies of *Galagoides demidovii* or *G. zanzibaricus* and almost totally neglected until very recently. Nocturnal Primate Research Group, Oxford Brookes University, is currently trying to clarify taxonomic status based on vocalisation and DNA of this and other Tanzanian and Kenyan galago species. Mountain Galago is assigned the Data Deficient status by the World Conservation Union (IUCN 2006). This means that, at the moment, there is not enough information to make an assessment of this species' risk of extinction. It is hoped that this small article will shed some light on the habits of this little known species.

The Udzungwa Mountains are part of the Eastern Arc Mountains, that together with other Eastern Afromontane forests comprise one of the 34 globally important biodiversity 'hot spots' (Mittermeier et al. 2004). The Eastern Arc Mountains have experienced substantial forest loss due to human activities during the last 2000 years, especially within the last 200 years (Moreau 1933 & 1935, White 1978, Rodgers 1998, Newmark 1998). Aerial photographs from 1956, 1978 and 1999 indicate that the Udzungwa Mountains did experience most of their forest loss before 1956 (Aerial photographs, Iringa District Lands, Natural Resources and Environment Office), andconsiderable logging has taken place in some

Table 1. Size, status and altitude range of the six forest fragments in this study.

Name of forest	Status	Altitude range	Size in ha
Kilanzi-Kitungulu	Catchment Forest Reserve	1520 – 1934 m	1100
Kitemele	Catchment Forest Reserve	1440 – 1820 m.	299
Kawemba	Catchment Forest Reserve	1520 – 1700 m.	57
Ifuo	Private forest	1940 – 2000 m	Approx. 57
Itanga	Private forest	1860 – 2020 m	Approx. 42
Kiseve	Village Government Forest	1540 – 1730 m	Approx. 22

Including the unsurveyed half of the forest owned by Ifuo Village (Village Government Forest).

forests, resulting in changes in species composition and structure (Lehmberg & Dinesen 2001).

Fieldwork took place in six forest fragments on the Dabaga plateau, Iringa District, Tanzania (see table 1 and figure 1). The forest fragments are found isolated in a matrix of fields, fallow fields and exotic plantations (Black wattle *Acacia mearnsii, Eucalyptus Eucalyptus sp.* and *Pine Pinus sp.*) between New Dabaga/Ulangambi Forest Reserve and larger forested areas to the east (Udzungwa Scarp Forest Reserve, Iyondo and West Kilombero Scarp Forest Reserve). The landscape near West Kilombero Scarp Forest Reserve and away from roads and villages is dominated by fire maintained grassland. The forest fragments remaining often persist on hilltops, in moist valley bottoms or around springs, restricted by annual fires in the surrounding grassland. Hunting by snaring, although illegal, is taking place in all the forest fragments. According to Nielsen (2004) Mountain galago is not targeted by hunters but may be caught accidentally.

Methods

Absence/presence data was collected from October-December 2000 and in February 2001. All observations and calls of Mountain Galago were noted. These observations were made while conducting other field work and all six forests were visited for at least one night. It was estimated that one night of observation was enough to access presence/absence, as this species is highly vocal and has species specific calls.

On the 2nd and 3rd May 2001, two transect walk assessments of Mountain Galago habitat preference were made in Kilanzi-Kitungulu Forest Reserve. Both walks were conducted at dusk along the same stretch of path through the forest. This path crosses a number of microhabitats inside the forest shrubbery, disturbed forest (canopy height about 10 m), and closed canopy forest (canopy height about 20-30 m), all habitats with single large/old trees interspersed.

Results

Mountain Galagos were observed in all surveyed fragments except in Ifuo Forest (57 ha). No other galago species were recorded in the fragments. One walk of 20 minutes and one walk of 15 minutes were carried out, and 12 (0.66 animal/min) and 5 (0.33 animal/min) Mountain Galagos were heard, respectively. They were observed calling in both closed

Fields burning on mountain side of fallow fields and plantations with small remnant of natural forest at the top. These annual burnings can result in wildfires, that are very damaging to forest remnants.

canopy and disturbed forest, but not in shrubbery.

In Kilanzi-Kitungulu Forest Reserve one Mountain Galago lived in a large tree standing on the edge of the forest. It was very vocal despite the fact that camp was just under the tree from where it was calling. This animal started calling around 20.00 hours for 4 consecutive nights in November 2000. In March 2001 in Itanga Forest three Mountain Galagos were sighted as they emerged from a tree at 19.00 hrs, while they uttered chirping sounds. They split up and jumped into three different trees. They were observed from 19.00 until 19.10 hrs slowly moving further into the forest.

During another study in the Udzungwa Mountains, to document the importance of small forest fragments for endangered mammals, an unusual catch of a Mountain Galago was made. One male Mountain Galago was caught in a Sherman trap set on the ground in Kilanzi-Kitungulu forest using bait of fried coconut and peanut butter. Total capture effort was 4968 trapnights. Andrew Perkin of the Nocturnal Primate Research Group, Oxford Brookes University, identified the specimen as Mountain Galago. He also ascribed tape recordings of calling animals from Itanga Forest to this species.

Discussion

One other Mountain Galago was caught in 2000 by Topp-Jørgensen et al. (2001 a) in the Village Government Forest (9 ha) during a survey using the same methods (capture effort was 8605 trap nights by Topp-Jørgensen et al. (2001 a & b)). Mountain Galago was the only dwarf galago species found on the Dabaga Plateau in both studies. Zanzibar Galago *Galagoides zanzibaricus* is found in the nearby West Kilombero Scarp Forest Reserve, but at lower altitudes than the forests on the Dabaga Plateau (Topp-Jørgensen et al. 2001 b, Perkin 2001).

Galagos were found in the smallest surveyed forests (9-42 ha) but not in the larger Ifuo Forest (57 ha). All forest fragments were heavily logged some years ago and trapping by local villagers is taking place (but not targeting Mountain Galago). The most striking difference between Ifuo Forest and the other forest fragments is the very few old growth trees present in Ifuo Forest. Dwarf galagos probably need large/old trees, for sheltering during the day as Bates (1905) observed for *G. demidovii* (see also Roslin 2002). In Itanga Forest (42 ha), a small old-growth patch persists, separated from the remaining part of the forest by a dirt road.

This old growth patch may have acted as a refugium for Mountain Galago during cutting activities in the neighbouring forest and later as a point of dispersal into the disturbed area, a behaviour also seen in other arboreal vertebrates (Whitmore 1997).

In the Village Government Forest (9 ha), several large *Parinari excelsa* trees persist. These could have acted as strongholds during cutting activities or Mountain Galago may have reinvaded the forest after cutting activities ceased, since it is only a few hundred metres from another small forest fragment adjacent to the much larger New Dabaga/Ulangambi Forest Reserve (3728 ha). The observation of the galago in the 9 ha fragment, suggests that these animals are able to persist in even very small fragments, or are able to travel at least short distances between forest patches. Further studies of the species habitat utilisation would be desirable to fully understand the effects of forest fragmentation.

The number of calling animals along the transect route was quite variable (5 and 12 animals on the two transect walks). This data set is very small but is supported by subjective observations in the other forests that indicated that the species is relatively common in the area. The transect walk in Kilanzi-Kitungulu Forest Reserve showed that the animals are found in all forested habitats as galagos were seen along the path both in forest with closed canopy cover and in broken canopy forest including small trees, but not in shrubbery or on the ground.

The two captures of the species were made in Sherman traps set on the ground (13573 trapnights combined this study and Topp-Jørgensen et al. 2001 a & b), showing that Mountain Galago at least occasionally will come down to the ground, probably to forage or travel between trees if these are widely spaced. These findings indicate that they could be

able to disperse to new forests, at least if these are close by. Decher (1997) showed that Demidoff´s Galago (*Galagoides demidovii*) is able to colonise new forest. On the Accra Plains, Ghana, the small (less than one ha) secondary forest at Kpong Agricultural Research Station was colonised by a population of Demidoff´s Galagos (Decher 1997).

Conclusion

Mountain Galago was the only dwarf galago found to be present in forest fragments from 1440 m to 2020 m on the Dabaga plateau. These animals inhabit forests and forest fragments, and seem to make little use of other habitats. Dispersal between fragments can probably occur if these are situated very close to each other, as Mountain Galago at least occasionally venture down to the ground. Local hunters do not target this species, and it is probably not limited by hunting. Rough and subjective observations indicate that Mountain Galago copes well with fragmentation and is able to occupy even small fragments (9 ha). Suitable shelter trees are probably a requirement and might be limiting for the occurrence of the species.

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I wish to thank: The Tanzanian Commission for Science and Technology; The Forest and Beekeeping Division; Iringa District Lands, Natural Resources and Environment Office; Iringa District Council; and the village chairmen in Kidabaga and Kiwalamu. The fieldwork for this study could never have been completed without valuable help from Mrs. Eda Nyamoga, Lactel Mmehwa, Lukas Magova, Miss Flora Kihoo, Mr. Wille and Mr. Chestnut. Financial and logistical support was given by MEMA – the Udzungwa Mountains Forest Management and Biodiversity Conservation Component funded by Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA). Logistical support was provided by Miss Tina Hanson.

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Getting to Yala Swamp

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Yala Swamp is a vast wetland protecting the mouth of the Nzoia River and the northeastern shore of Lake Victoria in Kenya. It is one of Kenya's 60 Important Bird Areas (IBAs). Lake Kanyaboli, which still shelters some of the fish species that have disappeared from Lake Victoria, is part of the Yala Swamp complex.

The swamp's large stand of papyrus reeds and other sedges collects water during the rains, stabilizes the muddy soil, traps sediments and filter pollutants. These ecological services help to keep Lake Victoria waters clear, reduce soil erosion and minimise the impacts of floods. However, various projects to drain the swamp and turn it into agricultural land over the years have reduced the swamp's ability to provide ecological services. There have been good harvests from the land, yes, but there has also been more flooding, more erosion, and more silting of the Lake.

Yala Swamp is a great place to go birding. The swamp shelters the papyrus endemics – bird species only found in the papyrus swamp habitat – such as Papyrus

Gonolek, Carruthers' Cisticola, White-winged Warbler, Papyrus Yellow Warbler and Papyrus Canary.
These shy, skulking birds may be difficult to find without an expert local guide, but there is a good range of waterbirds on the patches of open water, and most of the Western Kenya bird specialties along the edges of the swamp.

If you need a bird guide with good language skills and a grasp of conservation issues, you may want to pick a member of the Lake Victoria Sunset Birders – LVSB. They are based at the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya offices in Milimani Estate of Kisumu City, just next to the three-star Kisumu Sunset Hotel. Contact Evarastus Obura, LVSB Chairman or Mike Wairoma (Vice Chair) on 057 2024162 or 0723 421576. Address is P. O. Box 4201, 40100 Kisumu
E-mail: wck@vicweb.net or lakevictoriasunsetbirders@yahoo.co.uk
Another option is to get in touch with an upcoming Site Support Group in Yala Swamp, the Friends of Yala Swamp, Box 46, 40640 Hawinga. Cell phone number for the Chairman is 0721 335 968.

It is most rewarding to bird at the swamp in the morning hours so you may want to get to Siaya town in the evening, stay the night and set out to the swamp early the following morning.

To Yala Swamp by Road:
If you are driving, head for Siaya town (about 60 kms northwest of Kisumu city) by turning left at Luanda trading centre off the Kisumu-Busia road (Luanda market is just after Maseno University if you are driving from Kisumu) . On reaching Siaya town, continue westwards on the same main road. Just outside the town, you have three options:

1. Head straight through Boro trading centre to Nyadorera market then on to Port Victoria (another market). At Port Victoria, turn 2km south and into the north-western reaches of the swamp (Notice the Nzoia River and plenty of weavers, widowbirds, bishops, warblers and Black-headed Gonoleks on either side of the road, even seen from the vehicle!)

2. Turn left at Boro trading centre at the Hawinga Girls Secondary School signpost and proceed on the dirt road through Hawinga market up to the last Hawinga Girls Secondary School signpost at which you turn left and find the school 150m on. You may park the vehicle at the school (any time!) and proceed on foot along the school fence on a cattle trail directly into the thick papyrus swamp and fish-landing bay of Lake Kanyaboli. Chances are you will take two hours instead of 15 minutes to get to the swamp itself because you will be too busy twitching on the way! There are plenty of birds noisily flying across the path and over your head. Plenty of Gonoleks, warblers and weavers again when you actually reach the lakeshore itself.

3. The third option is, just outside Siaya town, still on the main road westwards, to turn left on a dirt road (much improved these days, ironically thanks to the Dominion Company, the US firm growing rice in part of Yala Swamp). The road passes through Oloo Aringo [and Awelo Estates then on to Obambo market to Kadenge (the soil is deep sticky black cotton soil here, so avoid this route unless you have 4WD). By the time you reach Kadenge, you will have long spotted the Lake Basin Development Authority, which are now Dominion stations; these are on the eastern shores

of Lake Kanyaboli. In fact, the lake begins to beckon with its horizontal silvery-line appearance right as you leave Siaya town.

When you reach Lake Kanyaboli, you may decide to either start birding right around its shores, or proceed on down the same road to Usenge, which is a major regional fish market (fishermen and fish vendors from both Kenya and Uganda do business here).

Points to note:

a) Do not forget your insect repellent if you are going to bird right in the swamp and you have never been by Lake Victoria before. Carry also plenty of bottled water and items that can make a sandwich or packed meal.

b) Local people are amazingly hospitable and peace-loving in all these markets and trading centres, and you can trust virtually anyone with anything. People are anxious to help and willing to abandon their tasks so as to be of service.

c) If you reach Siaya town in the evening, you may want to spend a comfortable night at the Mwalimu Hotel off the Posta Road as you enter the town. Decent alternatives are the Siaya Centre Hotel (the best one in the town centre) or Siaya Guest House and Villa Hotel, both on the Siaya Kisumu Highway just before you enter the town. At these hotels Bed and Breakfast is about Ksh 600 per person, for comfortable rooms with hot showers. They make good a la carte and buffet meals including nyama choma, fish or chicken curry. You may relax and watch soccer on DStv in the common room or enjoy watching a live performance by a resident Ohangla or Nyatiti (Luo traditional musical instruments) troupe, particularly on a Friday or Saturday evening. They each also have safe and secure parking with agents of a security firm on patrol.

d) Still, if you have a car, best to park it at a Police Station or Chief's camp just to be sure, particularly if you are to wander way off birding or sightseeing.

e) If you get close to Lake Kanyaboli, several young men who operate non-motorised boats will approach you and ask if you wish to cross to the opposite bank at a small fee. Say a firm NO as these boats have no outboard motor and the waves are rather unpredictable, particularly in the afternoons.

f) Aim to start heading back to Siaya before 3.00 p.m. if you are not to be caught in one of the not-too-infrequent afternoon storms (the roads, despite the recent improvement, are not all-weather).

g) At Usenge and Port Victoria markets, there will be lots of vendors with a wide array of incredibly beautiful curio items made out of papyrus, including cane chairs, baskets, trays and political-rally-type straw hats. They are unbelievably cheap and this is one of the chief places from where the Nairobi vendors obtain them, anyway. The main product for sale here is of course fish.

h) There will also be plenty of political exuberance, but you are free to turn a deaf ear.

Cars may be hired from Kisumu City (several car hire firms available in Kisumu and at least one in Siaya). But book well in advance and negotiate the terms. Rates generally much lower than in Nairobi.

BOOK REVIEW

Chahinian, B. J. 2005.

The Splendid Sansevieria

178 pp. Soft covers.
Published by the author, Buenos Aires.

Review by Prof. Len Newton,
Kenyatta University

About one third of the known species of Sansevieria are native to Kenya, and so this new book is of interest to us in East Africa. No general detailed monograph of the genus has been published since 1915, and the account for the Flora of Tropical East Africa is still awaited. After an introduction describing general features of these plants, most of the book consists of descriptions and comments (of varying length) featuring most species and many cultivars, arranged alphabetically by name. Most are illustrated by a colour photograph of either a cultivated plant or a plant in the natural habitat, or in a couple of cases a herbarium specimen. Then there is a shorter section describing some hybrids, followed by notes on cultivation, propagation and display. Next there is an identification key, followed by a list of published species with literature references, and finally a checklist of characters to be included in descriptions.

The plants featured are a mixture of documented field collected specimens and plants of unknown origin that are found in cultivation. As the author states, some of the latter could be hybrids. Unfortunately the author has not always distinguished between the documented and undocumented plants. Some, such as *S. aethiopica*, are illustrated as plants in habitat, and so we can assume that the description and comments are based on plants of known origin and certain identity. For *S. aubrytiana*, the author states that the identity of the plant illustrated "seems to be acceptable", suggesting that the specimen is not of known origin and just "turned up" in cultivation. Such hints are not given for all of the taxa featured. Although the book is not intended as a technical work, in which voucher specimens would be cited, some indication of the authenticity and reliability of identity in each case would have been useful. Without this information it is difficult to assess the value of the author's interpretation of species identities. For example, he states that *S. arborescens* and *S. bagamoyensis* are similar, and he gives some differences between them. Has he examined plants from the type locality of *S. bagamoyensis*? *Sansevieria arborescens* is not typified and so there is no known type locality, so what is the origin of the plants to which he is applying this name?

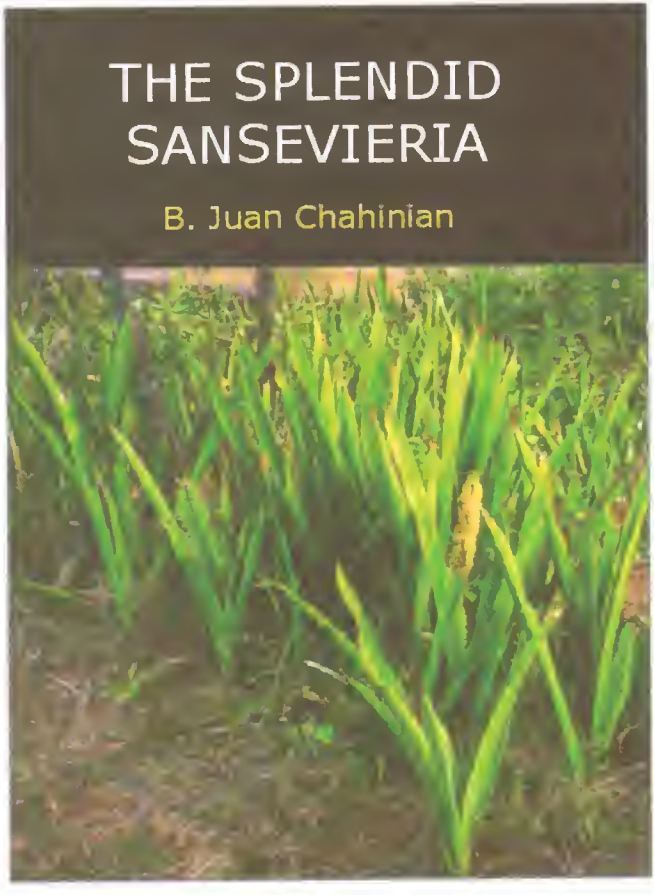
The author has made no reference to recent taxonomic literature, such as the accounts in the published floras of Ethiopia (1997), Somalia (1995) and South Africa (1992), which are reflected in the general account in the IOS lexicon (2001), also not mentioned in this book.

Had he consulted this literature he would have seen suggested solutions to enigmas such as *S. angustiflora*,

S. caespitosa and *S. scabrifolia*, to incorporate in his comments. He has not included two new species published by la Croix in 2004, *S. longistyla* (Malawi) and *S. pedicellata* (Mozambique), though their appearance in print might have been within the gestation period of the book. The identification key, based on vegetative characters, is a noble effort, and only a series of attempts to key out plants of known origin and certain identity will show how well it works.

There are some typographical errors. More seriously, there are a few factual errors in the text. The type locality for *S. powellii*, for example, is in Kenya, not Tanzania. The type specimen of *S. braunii* was collected from the Sigi Valley, in Tanzania, but it is clear from the protologue that it had been planted there, and the type locality is on the other side of Tanzania, at Ujiji. There is an unfortunate misunderstanding in presenting names other than the botanical names (generic name + epithet). Non-Latin names shown in single quotation marks are said to be "Plants that have as yet not been described", and this practice has confused cultivar names, which are properly published in accordance with the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants and should be shown in single quotes, with "unofficial" names given by individual growers. Some of the cultivation advice uses parochial terms, such as the use of "Q-tips" for pollination, better known in England and Kenya as cotton buds.

In spite of the shortcomings outlined above, the book is a worthwhile acquisition. It updates the former popular accounts of the genus by Morgenstern (1979), Swinbourne (1979) and Stover (1983), and gives far more information. It is well printed, in a handy size, and at $34.95 it is reasonably priced. The book is available from the author for US$43.95 (including airmail postage to Kenya). Contact Juan Chahinian at P.O. Box 10944, Naples, FL 34101–0944, U.S.A. (e-mail: chahinian@earthlink.net).



Surreal Celestial Phenomena

the Solar Eclipse over Nairobi, Kenya, mid-day 4th October 2005.

Photography by Elaine Mwango
Commentary by Fleur Ng'weno

In October 2005 a partial solar eclipse was visible in Kenya. A solar eclipse happens when the moon passes directly between the earth and the sun. The moon, much smaller than the sun but much nearer to the earth, blocks out part of the sun. In a total solar eclipse, the moon briefly blocks out the whole sun, turning day into dusk for an instant.

In a partial solar eclipse, some of the sun remains visible as the moon passes between the sun and the earth. The sun is so bright that even when most of it is blocked by the moon, it still seems to be shining brightly. However, the camera and the trees reveal an extraordinary event, as recorded in these photos by the late Elaine Mwango.

Through a mysterious combination of camera, filter and clouds, the photos at top show the sun both as we saw it with our eyes – round and shining; and as it really was – partly blocked by the passing moon.

On the ground, the dappled shade under trees provided a "pinhole camera" effect. Each round spot of sunlight that we see under leafy trees is actually an image of the sun. It is a "camera". When the moon passed across the sun, each spot of sunlight slowly became a crescent. The photos below were taken at the height of the eclipse, when each spot of sunlight between leaves had become a narrow crescent.

Remember

Nature Kenya in your long term planning or in your will and you can help sites and species for generations to come.

Augur Buzzard by Peter Usher

Endangered Woodland Of
Terminalia mollis
At Makhonge, Tongaren Division, Bungoma District, Western Kenya

Ibrahim Busolo Namunaba
National Museums of Kenya (Archaeology),
Kisumu Museum, P.O. Box 1779 Kisumu.

I visit Makhonge village in Bungoma District of Western Kenya four to five times a year. It is from the *Terminalia mollis*' local name, Kumukhonge, that the name of the village and market centre, Makhonge, is derived. Since 1990 I have made several observations regarding the human threat on indigenous woodlands around Makhonge, near Tongaren District Officer's office.

I interviewed a few local people to determine the use and survival of selected indigenous trees species. I admit here that I was ill-equipped at the time to identify some indigenous trees that I observed. However, some field guides and library resources proved invaluable in basic descriptions of species. I believe that the information below highlights the magnitude of the risk of one indigenous tree species, *Terminalia mollis*, faces and provides an opportunity for a systematic study in future. Local names as well as English and scientific names have been used where possible.

Terminalia mollis is distributed from West to southern Africa and eastwards to western Kenya and South Sudan. In Kenya, it is restricted to areas around L. Victoria, Kakamega, Bungoma and Trans Nzoia, where it grows in wooded grassland and as remnants in cultivatd farmlands. Most farmers focus on cultivation of land for either food or cash crops. Indigenous trees, riverine vegetation and wetlands have been reduced significantly as people struggle to increase their land holdings and agricultural productivity.

A broad-leaved deciduous tree, *Terminalia mollis* grows to an average height of 12m. and can be spotted in areas of Kamukuywa, Tongaren, Naitiri and Kiminini. Countable mature trunks have been spotted near Pan Paper Mills, Webuye. A solitary stem stands in the town centre of Kitale town suffocating in a thick layer of dust mixed with exhaust fumes from vehicles. These are areas with intensive agricultural activities (often referred to as the 'granary' of Kenya).

Specimens description
Specimens taken to the East African Herbarium at National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi, are described as below: Bark: Grey (near vertical fissures in old age). Leaves: Leathery, spirally arranged at the tips of branches, veins prominent below (older leaves shinny green on top) and the undersides bear short cream velvet hairs, up to 25cm long and 15cm wide, wider towards the apex sometimes pointed, the underside spotted with tinny white nodule-like features. Flowers:

Flowering in January, white to cream and unpleasantly scented. Fruits: seeds up to 3cm, fleshy at the middle, with a single wing around the seed. Germination: Not easy as evidenced from the low number of existing young trees.
The tree is drought-and termite- resistant, its wood is hard and yellow, but slow growing. Mature trunks host a number of epiphytic bryophytes dominated by light green and grey fungi. Mature woodlands will be seen to comprise mainly trees of a peer group with a sparse distribution.

Distribution
Terminalia mollis is exclusively found in the southeastern foothills of Mount Elgon among other tree communities. This ecological zone's climate is influenced by the Congo air stream, Lake Victoria and Western highlands of Kenya (Ojany and Ogembo 1988). Here, the climate varies from cool to hot with maximum temperatures up to 35° C. Rainfall average per year is about 1500mm with considerable variations, but is lower than in the typical tropical rainforest climate of the Congo Basin.

Observations
In my observations no young woodlands of the species above have grown to maturity in the last fourteen years especially in the intensively cultivated areas. In an interview with a sample of pioneer settlers of Makhonge village some of whom had worked on European farms in the pre-1963 period, I established that no young trees have grown to full maturity since 1965 or even earlier. However, young peer group trees exist on land portions that have seldom been cultivated for at least forty years, but they seem far from exhibiting characteristics of mature trunks.

Traditional uses of *Terminalia mollis*
Archaeological records show that the tree was used in iron smelting by the Bantu-speaking settlers of Lake Victoria basin as early as 1500 years ago (Sutton 1972: 88, Beentje 1994: 140). The species has no known medical value, but the local Bukusu people use kamakhonge, the local name for the tree's leaves, in cooking sweet potatoes. The potatoes to be boiled are first covered with leaves in a pot before covering with a lid. This reduces heat lose from the pot and at the same time it is believed to maintain the natural aroma of sweet potatoes. As a hard wood and termite resistant tree, it provides poles for the construction of traditional granaries, houses and pit latrines as well as fencing. Charcoal burning has taken a great toll on the tree.

The tree also provides shade for people and cattle as most homesteads are created near trees with dark shadows. However, cutting for the sake of it, and sometimes due to imagined threat that the *Terminalia mollis* poses a danger of falling on houses is also rampant. It was observed that people construct their houses near the tree, attracted by its shade during the dry season only to turn against it as the tree starts shading off its leaves. During the rain seasons, the ground beneath becomes so damp and therefore undesirable if this is located near the dwelling house. As a result, the number of mature trunks has reduced drastically in the recent past.

Western Kenya dots a few natural woodlands, which are disappearing fast due to uncontrolled human activities. The destruction of indigenous trees to pave way for farming, charcoal burning or firewood goes on unabatedly. Here, indigenous woodlands are dominated by various species of Combretum and Acacia, while grasses that have also

become rare to spot, belong to the Hyparrhenia (Buk. name: Bumuli) and Cymbopogon genera (Buk. name: Ebonga).

Uasin Gishu, Trans Nzoia, and Bungoma regions are characterized by mechanized and intensive farming activities that have not been friendly to the natural vegetation. This explains well what Spinage (1998) terms '... technological man who is incompatible with nature'.

Terminalia mollis is inadequately documented. From my observation, more research is needed on its life cycle, germination and geographical distribution beyond Western Kenya. Given the species' slow growth as well as sparse distribution and rampant agricultural activities, the tree might be wiped out of the botanical map of Kenya if measures are not taken to conserve it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the following people for their contributions to this article. Mr. Kirika of East Africa Herbarium, National Museums of Kenya assisted in the description and identification of the specimens; Chris Omari (Nation Media Group) and William Makokha (VI Agro-forestry Tree Planting Project, Kitale) were helpful in the collection of specimens. Felix Wasike (Kenyatta University) for reading through the manuscript and Joyce Fatuma Udi for allowing the collection of specimens from her farm. Mrs. Hannah Chao Busolo (for preparing and packaging the specimens for transportation to Nairobi. Many thanks also go to all interviewees who offered valuable information.

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In memory:

Joan Root 1936 - 12. 2006

By Dee Raymer

"She's somewhere in the sunlight strong"
Richard Gallienne

Joan was an active and supportive founder-member of Succulenta East Africa, where, to her delight, her chronic shyness evaporated amidst the members' easy camaraderie and the mutual interest in the wild. Her involvement with plants, one suspects, arose from the question of what eats which and, as a formidable all-around naturalist, she was an enormous asset on any field trip, but ever eager to learn more.

On an outing to Mayers' Ranch in the Kedong - 'Castles of clay' country - those other great all-around naturalists Tim and Lisa Campbell (now, sadly, retired abroad, but who have written with their condolences) were also present. Progress was snail-like: between the three of them not a tree, plant, bird, insect, animal, track, sign or scat went unidentified. When an awed member asked their areas of specialty, Lisa smiled seraphically and said, 'oh, we're just interested in everything.' It was a classic field trip.

Joan's experience and knowledge of the natural world was huge. Much of it grew from the years of team fieldwork, filming the unforgettable Alan and Joan Root wildlife series that redrew the benchmark for the genre.

Whilst their most famous works are possibly *Castles of Clay* (1978) and *The Year of the Wildebeest* (1976), it is perhaps *Two in the Bush* (screened on Channel 4 1989) that affords the best glimpse of her many backstage roles as the entire logistics and support section for Alan's genius behind the lens.

Everyone has vivid recall of that spitting cobra's twin streams of venom spattering her spectacles, but few are aware of the full extent of the drama; whilst Alan struggled with a crazy series of camera malfunctions, Joan had held the attention of the extremely irate cobra bent on escape and spitting at her repeatedly.

Over the years she has reared or kept over 130 different species of birds and animals, and was word-perfect on the ecology and requirements each. Under her calm and knowledgeable care they thrived. Her Naivasha property, one of very few remaining with riparian land open to wildlife, was managed entirely for their benefit. She had no need of a lawnmower-hippo and antelope were happy to oblige.

Beneath her life long shyness, especially with people she didn't know well, lay the marvelous qualities of her friendship. That unassuming and self-effacing exterior concealed a core of steel, great courage, luminous intelligence, a rare gift for close and accurate observation tempered with insight, and a superb sense of the ridiculous.

When relaxed, she was a stimulating and well-informed conversationalist. Animated discussions spanning a huge range of subjects marked the years of our friendship, hampered only slightly by the fact that she was a lark by nature and I am bleary at breakfast. Concessions were made on both sides.

Life had not always been kind to Joan and she was sometimes lonely, so laughter was something she prized very highly. It was always supremely satisfying to reduce her to giggles; eye-wiping gained an extra point.

After she and Alan parted, she set herself actively to redefining her life as an individual, rather than as half of a pair. Probably to her surprise, since she was so utterly unassuming, new friends emerged from the ranks of her many acquaintances and she valued them highly. As with her dealing with birds and animals, she respected individual space. Her friendship sat slightly and she would have been embarrassed were her many quiet kindnesses wider-known.

Only her love of adventure was undernourished, but in 1995, photographer David Coulson invited her to join an expedition to Niger and Algeria, recording some of the richness of Saharan rock art. Who better-qualified than the meticulous Joan to keep record of each exposure on every film used in six cameras? She was one of the most organized people I have ever met, and the ideal safari companion.

A total of some 20,000 photographs from his Saharan expeditions earned David a Fellowship of the Royal Geographical Society, a feature in National Geographic and much kudos for his book, *African Rock Art: Paintings and Engravings on Stone* (2001). Joan's practical capabilities proved invaluable. No mean photographer herself, her own photographic record of the first and two subsequent expeditions (Chad for 6 weeks, and a return to Algeria and Niger) was superb. As was that of her visit to Egypt, fulfillment of a long held ambition to see their antiquities for herself.

She was an ardent campaigner for the sensible and sustainable use of embattled Lake Naivasha. Single-handedly (and largely at her personal expense) she ran the anti-fish-poaching Task Force for the entire lake, which took heavy toll of her time, energy and peace of mind. Although with the authorities' full backing, she was amply aware that it made her an easy focus for bitter resentments. More recent disbandment of the Task Force would not have altered past grudges. Ironically, it may have been her dedication to the lake's conservation that brought about the vicious and senseless attack that ended her life.

Unassuming to a fault, she would have been amazed at the worldwide media coverage of her death, a measure of the esteem in which she was held. We who knew her are still struggling to come to terms with the shocking reality. Rest peacefully in the sunlight, Joan – how we shall miss you, good friend.

Nature Kenya is also sad to hear about the recent death of **Dr David Roden** the founder and Director of the idyllic Marich Pass Field Studies Centre. David hosted several Nature Kenya member visits and inspired many a field course student over his years in West Pokot. David's family will continue to run the Centre and welcome all visitors to this fascinating part of Kenya (www.gg.rhul.ac.uk/MarichPass/)

We also regret the passing of **Christa von Kalckstein, Elaine Mwango** and **Imre Loefler,** all long time loyal, dedicated and supportive members of Nature Kenya, who made a difference for the environment.

Chairman's report

The aim of the East Africa Natural History Society is to promote the study of natural history, and conservation of the natural environment, in eastern Africa

The EANHS operates in Kenya as Nature Kenya and in Uganda as Nature Uganda. Nature Kenya's mission is *Connecting nature and people*

The organization's strategy is to work to achieve the following objectives:

- Public awareness of the global, national, and local values of biodiversity increased
- Key biodiversity conservation sites prioritised, studied, documented and findings disseminated
- Nature Kenya's influence on decisions affecting biodiversity increased
- Action for protection of key species, sites, and habitats specified and initiated
- Larger, broader, and active membership base developed
- Funding increased from diversified sources
- Effectiveness and efficiency of Nature Kenya management and administration enhanced

2005 - 2006

The following reports are based on the above strategic objectives:

- Nature Kenya produced the following publications during the year: *Forests &Development, Community Guide to Forest Conservation, Important Bird Areas Status & Trends Report as well as the usual membership and subscription publications Nature East Africa, Scopus, the Journal of East African Natural History* and *Nature Net*

NatureKenya
The East Africa Natural History Society
Connecting nature & people

Committees have also been active in producing publications:

- Bird Committee printed a checklist for Kakamega
- Succulenta produced *History of Succulent Plants in Kenya*
- Friends of Nairobi Arboretum continued with regular *Trees* newsletter

- Biodiversity awareness has been creatively enhanced through activities like the Hinde's Babbler Volleyball tournament at Mukurwe-ini and the participation of Site Support Groups (SSGs) and school children in the World Migratory Bird Day.

- Media coverage has also achieved recognition of Nature Kenya's work as well as awareness. Events featured on Citizen Television and in newspapers; SSG activities featured in local radio stations such as Radio Waumini and Kameme FM.

- 95 acres of tussock grassland were bought in Kinangop as a demonstration site for the conservation of Sharpe's Longclaw and other grassland species.

- Proposals for the building of Resource Centres at Kinangop, Kereita and Mt. Kenya have received funding. These centres are important for school based environmental and cultural education.

- In moving from 'Important Bird Areas' to 'Key Biodiversity Areas', Nature Kenya is involved in monitoring of Pancake tortoise *Malacochersus tornieri* in Mwingi with CIP/ICIPE-GEF/UNDP support.

- Monitoring of the key sites, species, habitats continues, which includes detailed monitoring being carried out by Site Support Groups at five IBA sites.

- Nature Kenya condemned the downgrading of Amboseli National Park and joined other organizations in lodging a court case against this action

- The Arabuko-Sokoke Forest USAID funded project is achieving impressive results including improvements to the honey production unit, which was launched by Mr William Bellamy USA Ambassador.

- A 10 Kms water pipe line was also commissioned with support from Kindernothilfe, to benefit communities living adjacent to Arabuko-Sokoke Forest in Kilifi District.

- Membership activities have been many and

Engaging the media is an important part of Nature Kenya communication and advocacy

various and include
• Trip to Bobong Camp
• Camping at Mbweha Conservancy • Camping at Rumuruti organised by Succulenta • Succulenta trip to Ilbisil • Trip to Sagana Power Station • Eco-Fun day at the Nairobi Arboretum • Trip to Lake Ol'Bolossat • Trip to Ol Donyo Sabuk • Camping at Kinangop Guest House• Trip to Hippo Camp in Naivasha
• Talk: What do you know of Otters by Mordecai Ogada.

- Nature Kenya financial base improved significantly. Donors included: USAID; Jensen Foundation; Darwin Initiative; SWEDBIO; RSPB; KNH/NABU; DOF/DANIDA; EU-BCP/ CDTF; Ford Foundation; GEF-COMPACT; IUCN Netherlands; BIOTA; CEPF; Safaricom.

- Adminstratively, Management Subcommittee meetings have been reduced due to improved capacity of staff to manage and fewer routine issues needing attention. An operational procedure manual for staff is in place and there is satisfactory and timely donor accounting and reporting.

- Relocation to temporary premises within the Museum complex was successfully negotiated with National Museums of Kenya.

Chairman's report 2006-2007

Based on the same strategic objectives listed on page 28:

- Nature Kenya produced a resource book: *Learning for Sustainable Living in Kenya*, and 18000 copies were distributed to all Primary Schools in Kenya.

Prof. Kivutha Kibwana (Minister of Environment) launched the resource book. Teachers, pupils, media, conservation partners were in attendance. The book sanctioned by the National Environment Management Authority and the Ministry of Environment and is rated as highly informative by the primary schools.

- As SSGs grow in strength they are providing a model for community participation in conservation. Representatives from BirdLife Partners from 5 countries in Africa attended as observers the Capacity Building Training Workshop held in Naivasha.

- 3 Eco-resource Centres are now complete or near completion at Mt. Kenya, Kereita & Kinangop.

- Nature Kenya continues to receive considerable and effective media coverage including KBC television coverage of initiatives at Arabuko-Sokoke Forest and KTN and Nation cover of the Friends of City Park successful attempt to stop private developments at City Park.

- Monitoring of sites was boosted with further training of Site Support Groups carrying out monitoring at Dunga papyrus swamps. While detailed monitoring was done at 5 other IBAs and basic monitoring at all 60 IBAs.

Monitoring was also extended to the little known Dakatcha Woodlands IBA, which may be the only breeding site for the endangered Clarke's Weaver.

- Results of monitoring are published annually and the Chief Conservator of Forest launched the IBA Status & Trends Report 2005 at the Forest Department Headquarters in Karura (October 2006)

- Surveys of little known and non-IBA sites (Mau-Narok Grasslands, Shaba National Park) were also undertaken. Biodiversity and socio-economic surveys were done in Mumoni & Nuu Hills and Mwingi. There was also monitoring, with BirdLife Africa Division, in some of the 160 sites identified in the Eastern Arc and Coastal Forests Hotspot.

- *The Journal of East Africa Natural History* is up to date with 2 special Eastern Arc and Coastal Forests Hotspot issues supported by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund. The Journal is also now on line with Bio-One and Open Access for Research on the Environment (OARE).

- Income generating activities started with SSGs to reduce pressure on natural resources include mushroom farming, Aloe Vera farming & products at Arabuko-Sokoke Forest.

- At the Nature Reserve at Kinangop grassland recovery has resulted in increased number of grassland birds and 3 resident pairs of Sharpe's Longclaw have been recorded.

- Nature Kenya is expanding conservation work to other IBA sites such as Cherangani Hills, Busia Grassland, and North Nandi & Dakatcha woodland.

- Nature Kenya continues to attend the Amboseli court case filed by several conservation organizations.

- Nature Kenya presented comments to the national land policy draft and was invited to join the Kenya Vision 2030 National Committee

- Other fora where Nature Kenya is contributing include
  - the National GEF Review Panel
  - the EU-CEF Technical Advisory Committee
  - the KFWG Management Committee
  - the FAO Forestry Program National Committee
  - the Kenya Wetlands Forum of the EAWLS
  - the CEPF Coordination Unit
  - the Nature Kenya Executive Director is also elected to Birdlife Global Council and acts as the BirdLife Convention on Biological Diversity focal point for Africa.

- Field trips, Bird Watching and other activities have included: • Trip to Taita Hills • World Bird Festival • Succulenta trip to Ilbisil • Marking 100 years at the Nairobi Arboretum • Gardening and Compost making course • Camping at King'wal Swamp.

- Nature Kenya partnered with Sarit Centre and provided a programme of talks and films at the domestic tourism exhibition Getaway.

- The Shop at the museum continues to provide useful service making available a variety of books, t-shirts, binoculars, and scientific journals.

- Nature Kenya works with government agencies to achieve its objectives: NMK, KFS (FD), KWS, KEFRI, NEMA; From the NGO Community: BirdLife, RSPB, EAWLS, KFWG, ACC, A Rocha, WWF, CEPF, IUCN, CI

- Nature Kenya financial base improved significantly with considerable support from BirdLife and their partners, especially the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in Britian

Donors include RSPB; USAID; Jensen Foundation; Darwin Initiative; SWEDBIO; TTF, EU, KNH/NABU; DOF/DANIDA; EU-BCP/CDTF; Ford Foundation; GEF-COMPACT; IUCN Netherlands; BIOTA; CEPF; Safaricom.

A private developers fence going up at City Park. The Friends of City Park rallied the press and relevant government agencies successfully against several attempts and each time the fences were taken down

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